

Notes on Dialogue Using Principles for Community Foundations
Plenary Session Friday May 12, 745 -9:15
CFC Conference 2006
Panel members: Monica Patten, Steve Gunderson, Tim Brodhead

Purpose

- To provide external commentary on CFC's principles for community foundations within the current global, philanthropic environment
- To challenge us and push our thinking about the principles and how we understand and apply them to our work

Commentary

TIM

- Principle on global engagement (communities are no longer geographical)
- Stronger emphasis on leadership – it's a defining role for community foundations
- Emphasis on need to take risk – risk drives success – redefine risk as learning

STEVE

- 5 years is an eternity for review – principles need annual review
- Are we engaged in building communities or building community foundations?
- Emphasis needs to be strengthened on the convening role
- What is our role in government relations and advocacy and are education and advocacy one and the same?
- We need to strengthen communications and become the voice of philanthropy to the general public, media, government – if we don't define philanthropy others will do it for us
- There is the issue of effectiveness – accountability of public money collected by tax exemptions – we need to know what our impact is and the return on our investments
- Ethics is more than transparency – there must be a code of conduct and we need to deal with misconduct internally
- We can be the architects of social change – what skills are required to provide leadership (not just respond)

TIM

- We need to open dialogue on what we expect from government and corporations – there is a grey area over public/private support of large institutions like hospitals and cultural institutions. For example with a Montréal hospital project the government/community split was 80/20 – the 20% takes took dollars out of funds that would go to community and are now directed to a public institution

STEVE

- Story of funding withdrawal from Pittsburg Public schools until the schools got their act together

- Story of economic development impact – Kalamazoo every student receives a 4 year scholarship upon graduation - workplace job training is a priority
- COF took on the Getty Trust and did so publicly for misuse of funds – this transformed the Getty and sent a signal to government that we are willing to take on the tough issues ourselves – we need to ask ourselves how we deal with a rogue group using the foundation name. Principles, guidelines and standards are essential to govern our work

TIM

- Our values must be explicit in order to deal with controversial issues – example of Hamilton Community Foundation responding to hate crime following 911 and - this pushed the edge of what a community foundation might do but it was absolutely in the context of their principles
- Story of Northern Ireland community foundation filling a vacuum and creating a bridge between the protestant and catholic communities in Belfast to build communications and trust and to redefine community

TIM

- We can be deliberate about the kind of change we want in our communities and shape our communities
- We can change our mindset – its not about money – all North Americans think size matters – we need to get away from this because we can never meet all of the needs of communities
- we can convene neutral democracy

STEVE

- We need to get ready for new levels of partnerships – at the local level and at the corporate level
- We need to focus on service not assets
- Need to understand how we learn from one another